

We claim:

1. A decontamination device for decontaminating medical apparatus, comprising:  
a housing;  
a dispenser within the housing for contacting a portion of said medical apparatus with a decontaminating compound when said portion of said medical apparatus is placed within said housing; and  
structure for removably engaging said housing to said medical apparatus.
2. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said structure for removably engaging said housing to said medical apparatus comprises interlocking structure for engaging a portion of said medical apparatus.
3. The decontamination device of claim 2, wherein said interlocking structure comprises at least one elastically deformable, inwardly directed protrusion on said housing.
4. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said dispenser comprises an absorbent material having absorbed therein said decontaminating compound.
5. The decontamination device of claim 1, further comprising structure for attaching said decontamination device to said medical apparatus when said medical apparatus is in use.
6. The decontamination device of claim 5, wherein said attachment structure is a lanyard.

7. The decontamination device of claim 1, further comprising a removable cover for said housing.

8. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein at least two of said decontamination devices are detachably engaged.

9. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said housing comprises indicia providing information concerning said decontamination device.

10. The decontamination device of claim 9, wherein said indicia comprises at least one selected from the group consisting of color, printed material, and embossed material.

11. The decontamination device of claim 9, wherein said indicia comprises at least one selected from the group consisting of the decontaminating compound and the medical apparatus for which the decontamination device is intended.

12. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound comprises a disinfecting compound and a sterilizing compound.

13. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of glutaraldehydes.

14. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of chlorine compounds.

15. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of alcohols.

16. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of iodophors.

17. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of peroxygen compounds.

18. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of phenolics.

19. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said decontaminating compound is at least one selected from the group consisting of quaternary ammonium compounds.

20. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said dispenser contains an indicator compound for indicating that the medical apparatus has been contacted by said decontaminating compound.

21. The decontamination device of claim 1, wherein said housing is dimensioned to receive the head of a stethoscope.

22. A method for using medical apparatus, comprising the steps of:

providing a decontamination device comprising a housing, a dispenser within said housing for contacting a portion of said medical apparatus with a decontaminating compound when said portion of said medical apparatus is placed within said housing, and structure for removably engaging said housing to said medical apparatus;

placing a portion of said medical apparatus in said housing, thereby contacting said portion with said dispenser and said decontaminating compound;

using the medical apparatus; and

replacing the portion of the medical apparatus in the housing of the decontamination device and engaging the housing to the medical apparatus using said, engagement structure, whereby said portion of said medical apparatus is decontaminated.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said decontaminating compound is comprised of at least one of a sterilizing compound and a disinfecting compound.